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CONSUMER TIME

R-83

School Lunches

NETWORK: NBC

DATE: January 30, 1943

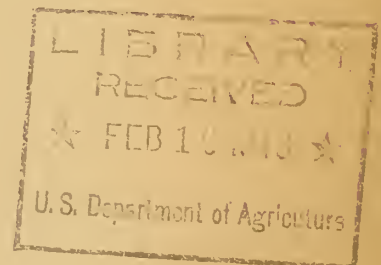
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Produced by Consumers' Counsel Division of the Department of Agriculture
and presented in cooperation with United States Government
agencies working for consumers.

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1. SOUND: CASH REGISTER . . RINGS TWICE.
2. MAN: (SIMPLY) This is CONSUMER TIME.
3. SOUND: COIN'S IN DRAWER . . CLOSE DRAWER.
4. WOMAN: That's your money buying food.
5. SOUND: CASH REGISTER.
6. MAN: That's your money paying for a home.
7. SOUND: CASH REGISTER.
8. WOMAN: That's your money buying clothes.
9. MAN: Buying you a living in wartime.
10. SOUND: CASH REGISTER . . CLOSE DRAWER.



11. SOUND: PAUSE: THEN A GENTLE RAPPING ON DOOR. DOOR OPENED.

12. TEACHER: Hello. Did you knock?

13. MARY: (AGE THREE) Yes. Are you the teacher?

14. TEACHER: Why, yes ---

15. MARY: Can I come in?

16. TEACHER: Are you sure this is the room you want? This is the third grade in here.

17. MARY: I want the third grade.

18. TEACHER: Well - can you tell me how old you are?

19. MARY: Three and a half.

20. TEACHER: But my dear - we can't take such little girls into school. You'll have to grow up bigger before you come.

21. MARY: (PLEADING) Please let me be in third grade.

22. TEACHER: But why? What makes you want to come?

23. MARY: My brother Billy - he's in third grade, and he says ---

24. BILLY: (AGE NINE. OFF) Mary!

25. MARY: There he is. Hello, Billy.

26. BILLY: (FADING IN) Does Mother know you're here?

27. MARY: (RELUCTANTLY) No.....
28. BILLY: Well, you go straight home - right now - or I'll tell ---
29. TEACHER: Wait a minute, Billy Mary - why did you want to come here?
30. MARY: Because I'm hungry.
31. TEACHER: Hungry!
32. MARY: Yes - and Billy said you give him such good lunches at school. So I want to be in third grade too.
Please let me come in.

(PAUSE)

33. JOHN: (ON CUE) School lunches..... What about the school children in your neighborhood? Are they getting the kind of lunch they need to keep them strong and healthy? The kind of lunch that will see them through this war and build fine, responsible citizens for tomorrow?

We here in the Department of Agriculture are concerned about that. Because we know that there are millions of children - right now, in America today - who are not getting the food they need. And we know that - at least five days out of the week - they could be getting good lunches.

34. SOUND: SCHOOL BELL TOLLING, OFF MIKE.

35. JOHN: Hear that? It's a school bell. Ringing through the woods around a little school for colored children - in Jefferson County, Georgia. That bell's been ringing for a good many years, and for about seventeen of those years, the children in that school have been getting good lunches - or at least as good as the school could provide.

36. SOUND: BEGIN TO FADE SCHOOL BELL.

37. JOHN: How did it all start? Well, suppose we ask the principal - a Negro woman ---

38. NEGRO: I started serving school lunches because I couldn't bear to see those spindly little brown legs that were too weak to run and play as children have a right to. Pinched, pitiful little faces that hardly cared to smile. Those children - a hundred and twenty-one of them - came from families who simply couldn't afford to buy the food they needed. So we - the children and I, at school there - we started to grow what food we could. We dug up an acre around the school and planted it to vegetables. And - well, two generations of children have been fed from that garden. I kept records too - the weights of the children - the menus we served, and so on. But the best record is right out there in the school yard ---

39. SOUND: LAUGHTER AND VOICES OF CHILDREN, OFF.

40. NEGRO: That's the best record. Look at them. Strong -
healthy - happy - alive ---

41. GIRL: (FADING IN) Teacher - the spinach is up this high!

42. NEGRO: Is it?

43. BOY: (FADING IN) Look, Teacher! A carrot! It's got
green feathers on top and a orange thing on the bottom!

44. SOUND: FADE OUT CHILDREN'S VOICES.

45. JOHN: Those children are getting the food they need -
because somebody cared. Their teacher was a pioneer -
'way out in front in America's march toward a greater
democracy. And as the idea of school lunches spread
from town to town and state to state, other people
were pioneering too. In a little one-room school at
Fern Hill, Oregon ---

1ST MAN: We decided that our kids had ought to get a good
solid lunch at noontime, but there ain't much room
for cookin' in a one-room school. So all us menfolks
got together all the lumber we could find - carted it
to the schoolhouse ---

47. SOUND: SAWING AND HAMMERING. LUMBER BEING UNLOADED.

48. 2ND MAN: There - that ought to be enough lumber to build a
lean-to cook shed.

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49. 1ST MAN: Sure thing. We got enough here for tables and benches too.
50. 2ND MAN: Say - look what's comin'!
51. 1ST MAN: Molly Jenkins! Here - gimme that load o' pots and pans.
52. MOLLY: (FADING IN) There's some dishes in the car. They're heavier.
53. SOUND: POTS AND PANS.
54. 2ND MAN: What you been up to anyhow? Robbin' all the kitchens hereabouts?
55. MOLLY: Robbin' nothin', Jod Peters. These things are all donated - for the school lunchroom. Didn't think us womenfolks would let you men outdo us, did you?
56. 1ST MAN: Then all this lunchroom needs now is some food - and somethin' to cook it on.
57. MOLLY: We've got that too. You know old man Harshaw ---?
58. 2ND MAN: The one that runs the second-hand store?
59. 1ST MAN: Don't tell me he's helpin' out. Why, he's been dead agin this idea from the start. Said that folks that had kids ought to feed 'em themselves.

60. MOLLY: Well - dead agin' it or not - he's givin' us an old second-hand stove.
61. 1ST MAN: Well, I'll be!
62. MOLLY: And the school board's just voted to provide meat and shortening and sugar and ---
63. 2ND MAN: You don't say!
64. MOLLY: I do say. And I say you men had better get a move on here and get this lean-to built!
65. 1ST MAN: (ON CUE. CHUCKLING) So that's how we got started. Folks on farms roundabout chipped in what food they could to make up for what the school board didn't give us. But we found we couldn't always count on that food from the farms, so we wrote to the Government in Washington. We'd heard tell that they were giving food to schools for lunches.....
66. JOHN: Yes, the Government was giving food for school lunches. That was back in 1933, when the nation-wide school lunch program first started. And letters were coming in from every side - asking for more food for more children. School lunches served from a chuck wagon on the desert in Nevada.... School lunches served in the man-made canyons between city skyscrapers... Grateful letters - touching letters ---

67. ITALIAN WOMAN: My leetla Joe - he much more gooda boy now since he get fine-a lunch atta school. He no stay away from school to play with bad-a boys on city streets. Now he like to go to school. He grow up fine boy. Fine, strong American. Thank you, Uncle Sam. Thank you very much.
68. SOUTHERN FARMER: I'm a farmer, and I say of course children should eat decent, and I'm all for this school lunch plan. Every farmer likes to see food he's planted and taken care of put to good use.
69. BAKER: I'm a teacher in a small town in Arizona, and I want to tell you how terribly much this school lunch program means to the children. It means they're brighter - get better grades - show more interest in their lessons. It means they're healthier too. Less absences due to illness. If you could have seen those children before the lunch program started - as I did, my first day at the school..... I'd been told that we all brought our lunches - teachers and pupils both - and ate out in the school yard. So I brought mine and was just opening it when I heard children's voices ---
70. JOE: (AWAY FROM MIKE) Leggo! That's mine!
71. HENRY: Try and get it!

72. JOE: Give it here, you ---
73. BAKER: (FADING IN) Here -- here! What's the trouble?
74. JOE: Henry stole my lunch!
75. HENRY: I just wanted a part of it ---
76. BAKER: Where's the lunch now?
77. HENRY: (GRUDGINGLY) Here -- in my pocket.
78. BAKER: Where's the rest of it?
79. HENRY: That's all there was, Miss Baker.
80. BAKER: Just this one hard biscuit?
89. JOE: (DEFENSIVELY) That's all lots of the kids bring.
90. HENRY: Gee, look at the lunch Miss Baker's got!
91. JOE: Boy! Sandwiches -- and milk -- and a tomato -- and ---
92. BAKER: It -- it's much more than I could ever eat alone.
Why don't you boy's help me eat it?
93. HENRY: Gee! Do you really mean that?
94. BAKER: Sure I mean it. Here -- help yourself ---
95. JOE: Boy, oh boy! What a lunch!

96. BAKER: (ON CUE, NARRATIVE) I couldn't have eaten it alone - with those hungry eyes upon me. I learned later that other teachers were sharing their lunches too, but we couldn't feed two hundred mouths that way. So we decided to start a lunch project. We used the janitor's wood heating stove - got hold of a large pot and some tin cups and spoons. Then - with the help of the other children - we served one hot dish.

97. BAKER: CHILDREN'S VOICES. TIN CUP LADLING OUT STEW.

98. JOE: Here, Henry - here's your cup of stew ---

99. HENRY: Gee, thanks!

100. BAKER: And a piece of bread ---

101. HENRY: Thanks, Miss Baker. (SNIFF) Mmmmm! Smell the stew!

102. JOE: Don't it smell good? It smells better'n anything, I betcha.

103. SOUND: FADE CHILDREN OUT.

104. BAKER: (ON CUE. NARRATIVE) Gradually people in town heard what was going on and donated food and money; and when our new school was built, the school board and community sponsored a fully equipped cafeteria. So now we have a real lunch project: a good, complete lunch for each child every day, with part of the food

(MORE)

contributed by the Government.

Those who can afford to, pay for their lunch, though never more than ten cents. Those who can't pay, get it anyway. And we've arranged it so that none of the children knows who pays and who doesn't. Teachers in our home economics department direct the lunch-room and most of the work of cooking and dishwashing and so on is done by workers paid by WPA. At least, it has been up to now. And that's one of the things I want to ask you folks in Washington about. Now that WPA is being stopped, what's going to happen to our school lunch project - and all the other schools that have been getting WPA help? Who's to do our cooking? And how about the food we've been getting from the Agricultural Marketing Administration? Will that keep on coming? Please let us know.....

105. JOHN: (ON CUE) We've been getting a lot of letters like that lately at the Department of Agriculture. Maybe you've been wondering about your own school lunch project. How about you, Mrs. Freyman? Are you worried?
106. FREYMAN: Well, we've never had WPA help at the school in our neighborhood, Johnny. Instead, all the mothers have taken turns serving and cooking and so forth.
107. JOHN: Well, would you mind telling us how you work it? That might help Miss Baker and other people who'll

108. FREYMAN: We just take turns, Johnny. All the mothers who have children in school - and some, like myself, who don't - give one day each term.
109. JOHN: What about mothers who work all day at other jobs?
110. FREYMAN: Oh, they get somebody to substitute for them at the lunchroom - or else they contribute money or food instead.
111. JOHN: And you find this plan works out pretty well, huh?
112. FREYMAN: It's worked very well - up till recently. But now so many of the women are getting busy with war work that it's hard to find volunteers.
113. JOHN: Don't they consider this war work?
114. FREYMAN: Well, not so closely connected with the war as some of the other jobs that are calling for volunteers.
115. JOHN: Seems to me this is the most important job a woman could do in wartime - seeing that the children got fed properly.
116. FREYMAN: That's what I try to tell them. After all, it's these children we're fighting the war for. They're the ones who are going to have to build the world of the future, and they've got to be strong and healthy to do it.

117. JOHN: Exactly. I think if you can make the women understand that, you can get volunteers all right. Go to your OCD headquarters. Make them realize that this is war work. With food shortages now, the children need good lunches more than ever. Instead of school lunches stopping now, more and more schools ought to start serving them.
118. FREYMAN: But what about equipment, Johnny? Can they get stoves now - and big kettles - and things like that?
119. JOHN: There are still some available - for anything as important as a school lunch project.
120. FREYMAN: How would a school go about getting what they need?
121. JOHN: They might pay for it with the money they will take in from children who can afford to pay for their lunch.
123. FREYMAN: Isn't there any other way to get funds?
124. JOHN: Yes. The sponsoring group might raise the money locally - or they might apply to their State Board of Education.
125. FREYMAN: Oh? I didn't know that the board of education would help out on school lunches.

126. JOHN: They are in Rhode Island. There the State board is taking over the support of thirty-eight school lunch projects which used to be financed by WPA - so Rhode Island can keep its lunchroom workers on the job.
127. FREYMAN: Well, that's very encouraging. Maybe other States will do something like that.
128. JOHN: Maybe they - will if the people want it.
129. FREYMAN: Well, how about food for school lunches, Johnny? Is the Federal Government - in Washington - going to keep on supplying some of it, as they have in the past?
130. JOHN: Well, suppose we ask somebody from the Food Distribution Administration about that. They're the ones who have been supplying it. I thought you'd have some questions on the subject, so I've asked Mr. J. S. Russell, Deputy Director of Food Distribution, to come here to the studio today.
131. FREYMAN: Oh, good ---
132. JOHN: Mr. Russell - would you mind coming over here to the microphone?

133. RUSSELL: (FADING IN) Not at all, Johnny.
134. JOHN: I'd like you to meet our inquiring consumer, Mrs. Freyman ---
135. RUSSELL: How do you do..
136. FREYMAN: How do you do, Mr. Russell.
137. RUSSELL: Well, now-inquire ahead ---
138. FREYMAN: All right. Then how about food for school lunch projects? Is the Government going to have supplies which they will distribute without charge ---?
139. RUSSELL: Well, not exactly, Mrs. Freyman. Things are different this year - with so much food needed for our armed forces and our allies - and transportation lanes tied up with war materials.
140. FREYMAN: You mean the Government can't help with food for school lunches?
141. RUSSELL: I mean we can't distribute all of it. We can't ship apples and dried milk and flour around the country the way we used to. Instead, we're starting a new plan.
142. FREYMAN: And what's that, Mr. Russell?

143. RUSSELL: Well, the sponsoring group - that is, the group in a community which sponsors the local school lunch project ----
144. FREYMAN: You mean - like the P.T.A. - or the American Legion - or whatever group has been sponsoring it ----
145. RUSSELL: That's it. They will buy the food locally - from farmers, or stores, or wholesalers - and then we will reimburse them - up to a specified amount.
146. FREYMAN: You'll pay them back a certain amount of the cost of the lunches.
147. RUSSELL: Yes. You see, sponsors are required to contribute part of the program cost as a community undertaking.
148. FREYMAN: I see. Then - if a community wants to start a school lunch project - the first thing is to get a group to sponsor it.
149. RUSSELL: That's right.
150. FREYMAN: Well, how will they know which foods to buy?
151. RUSSELL: We'll let them know which foods are most plentiful and nutritious. We're trying - more than ever - to make these school lunches as nutritious and well-balanced as possible. A complete lunch.
152. FREYMAN: Well, tell me, Mr. Russell - just what do you mean by a "complete" lunch? What should it include?

153. RUSSELL: Well, here's the menu recommended by our nutritionists as a complete lunch for a child.... First - at least one half-pint of milk.
154. FREYMAN: One half-pint of milk.
155. RUSSELL: Next - two vegetables, or else one vegetable and a fruit. Third - a serving of meat, or fish, eggs, dried peas, or beans.
156. FREYMAN: A protein food.
157. RUSSELL: That's right. Then fourth comes whole-grain or enriched cereal - either in bread or some other form.
158. FREYMAN: With butter?
159. RUSSELL: That's our next item on the menu. Either butter, or margarine that has been fortified with Vitamin A. And finally - and this optional - either a fruit or a simple sweet for dessert.
160. FREYMAN: My, that's a regular meal!
161. RUSSELL: It is a regular meal. And that's just what a good lunch should be. Nutritionists say that we should eat at least a third of our day's supply of food at noontime. They find it's even more important to eat a good meal then - in the middle of the day - than at night, when your day's work is all over.

162. FREYMAN: Well, that makes plenty of sense, but I've been wondering ----
163. RUSSELL: Yes ----?
164. FREYMAN: Some people might be discouraged by this. I mean - it sounds like such a big job - so much food ----
165. RUSSELL: Mrs. Freyman - any food they can provide for school children is so much to the good. They can start small, if they have to, and work up toward this complete lunch. The main thing is to get started - just as soon as possible - providing some food
166. FREYMAN: And the first step is to get some group of people in the neighborhood interested enough to push the thing ----
167. RUSSELL: That's right. Either the Parent-Teacher Association, or the American Legion Auxiliary - or some group that can start the school lunch project and get it going.
168. FREYMAN: But they'll need to know just how to go about it ----
169. RUSSELL: Well, I have a leaflet right here that will tell them all they want to know. It's called "A School Lunch For Every Child", and I've given a stack of copies to Johnny to distribute to your listeners --
170. FREYMAN: "A School Lunch For Every Child."

171. JOHN: That's the title, Mrs. Freyman, and we'll send a copy of this leaflet to anybody who will write in to us. Just address your request to: CONSUMER TIME - Department of Agriculture - Washington, D. C. And be sure to tell us your own name and address and the call letters of your radio station. Now, for next week's CONSUMER TIME ---

172. FREYMAN: Are you having a hard time getting butter? Do you know what other food fats you can use in cooking or as spreads for bread? Do you know the best ways to conserve and stretch your use of butter, fats and oils?

173. JOHN: Next week's program will bring you the answers to these vital questions. So - listen in!

174. ANNOUNCER: For your copy of today's leaflet, "A School Lunch For Every Child", telling how your Government can help you provide a good school lunch for your children, write to CONSUMER TIME, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. Give your name and address and the call letters of your radio station.

Heard on today's program were: Evelyn Freyman, Jeanne Contini, Nancy Ordway, Frances Adams, Mary Dudley, Michael Rack, Don Baker, Ken Banghart, and Mr. J. Stuart Russell, Deputy Director, Food Distribution Administration, Department of Agriculture.

Script by Jane Ashman.

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